

**Report to the Legislature**  
**The Center for Community Transitions**  
**The Center for Women**  
**2010-2011**

**The Center for Community Transitions**

Opened in 1974 as Energy Committed to Offenders, Inc., (ECO) **The Center for Community Transitions (CCT)** has three primary programs, **LifeWorks!**, **Families Doing Time** and **The Center for Women**.

CCT began assisting individuals leaving prison with their transition back to Mecklenburg County. This transition program is now called **LifeWorks!** and utilizes cognitive behavioral interventions to assist clients in their transition home specializing in finding employment. In 2010-11, **LifeWorks!** served 483 who attended orientation in this program, 406 participated in the employment classed and had 322 graduates. In a tough economic year, 114 became employed.

Soon after the organization began its work, the founders realized that families of those incarcerated were serving a different kind of sentence. Theirs was one of isolation, shame, guilt, less finances and increased emotional distress. The program, **Families Doing Time**, provides counseling, support groups for children of incarcerated parents, outreach and education. The program is building the capacity of Charlotte Mecklenburg to assist children and families of prisoners. Those who are most likely to encounter families and children of those incarcerated and have received training from CCT include the Department of Social Services supervisors and front line staff, Charlotte Mecklenburg School social workers and school psychologist, and those serving preschool age children. The curriculum has been approved as continuing education credits for preschool teachers.

**The Center for Women**

**The Center for Women** has operated in Mecklenburg County as a contract work release program for state female offenders since 1987. This provides a location for women to complete their sentence closer to home and begin the transition prior to release. With an 87% success rate since 1987, this program has all the elements of a best practice.

The goal of **The Center for Women** is to prepare female offenders and families who are within three years of release for their transition back into the community. As a reentry facility, CCT offers case management, work release, family leave, family support, problem solving skills workshops, study release, employment readiness, opportunities for spiritual and religious activities, volunteer program for the residents to volunteer in the community and for community volunteers to assist CCT and the residents, and life skills development.

When the Center for Women opened in 1987, it served 20 women at a time. In, October of 2010, the program moved into a newly built facility now serving 30 women at any one time.

The new facility is located on 2.8 acres of land and is a half block from the planned light rail line to UNC – Charlotte. It includes a learning center, a conference room, a counseling room and a

medical room. **Families Doing Time** program is also located on this site to provide parenting and family problem solving guidance.

## **2010-2011**

### **Resident Movement**

In 2010-2011, there were 43 residents assigned to **The Center for Women**. Nine (9) women released, three (3) transferred due to disciplinary infractions, one (1) transferred for medical reasons and one (1) for administrative reasons.

The average length of stay was 13 months (includes transfers and releases).

### **Demographics**

Residents came from 25 different counties: Alamance, Anson, Avery, Buncombe, Burke, Cabarrus, Cherokee, Cumberland, Davidson, Forsythe, Franklin, Gaston, Guilford, Iredell, Lincoln, Macon, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Robeson, Stanley, Surry, Wake, Watauga, Wilkes and Yadkin.

Of the 43 residents, 37 were mothers of 41 children. 36 of these children were younger than age 18.

Of the 43 residents, 14 were African American, 28 Caucasian and one (1) Hispanic.

The age range was 29 to 65, with the average being 48 and the median 41.

### **Criminal Charges**

These numbers represent multiple convictions for the 43 residents served in FY 2010-2011. Lesser charges such motor vehicle offenses, trespassing, property damage etc. have not been included.

Category	# of Residents
Homicide	9
Assault/Threat	15
Robbery, Larceny, Breaking and Entering	43
Obtaining Property by False Pretense, embezzlement	88
Weapons	2
Drug Offenses	65

Sentences ranged from 3 years to 58 years, with the average being 8 years.

### **Employment**

There were 15 different employers during the year, with several women working for the same employer in different locations. Due to the current economic situation, it was much more difficult for residents to find full-time employment and the selection of places to work was limited.

Number of residents	Position
1	Call center representative
2	Cashier
16	Cashier, food prep, server

1	Customer service
1	Dishwasher
8	Food prep
2	Food prep, vending services
1	Front desk clerk
2	Housekeeping
1	Maintenance/cleaning
1	Office manager
1	Project manager
1	Seamstress
1	Warehouse

### **Resident Earnings**

The 43 residents who were employed during the year earned a total of \$293,694.11. The hourly rates were between \$7.25 and \$12.00 per hour. 15 residents paid \$42,168.33 in restitution. 5 paid \$12,388.54 in child support.

### **Outcomes**

The Center for Women has shown continuous success in the transition of women from prison to home. Since 1987, we have measured the recidivism rate as defined by a rearrest after two years and have maintained a success rate of 87%. Of the 14 residents who were released from the Center in the year 08-09, none have been rearrested.

In 2007, as soon as Tina was released, she was promoted to the manager of her store with the duties of hiring, managing, preparing store reports, and ordering supplies and products. It was rocky for her at the start and once when a staff member checked in on her she was managing the store living out of her car for a short while. Since that time she has rented a house and her youngest children have come to live with her. She is now the manager of the busiest store in the chain in downtown Charlotte. Within a year of release, Tina was hiring residents to come and work with her at her store. The entire chain has begun using residents from the Center for Women as a key part of their workforce.

Here are a few examples of the residents released this year.

Carol was released in July, 2010. She is still working for the same company she worked for when she was at the facility. Recently she shared the good news that she has received a promotion to General Manager.

Darlene, released in February, 2011, is still working for the company she worked for when at the Center in the same position in the accounting department of a warehouse. She lives alone in an apartment and has been able to buy a car.

Gina continues the job she had when she was at the Center, has her own apartment and car, and has been reunited with her two children and ten grandchildren.

Ella continues in her same job also, has received a promotion to lead worker, has her own apartment and car, and has been reunited with her husband.